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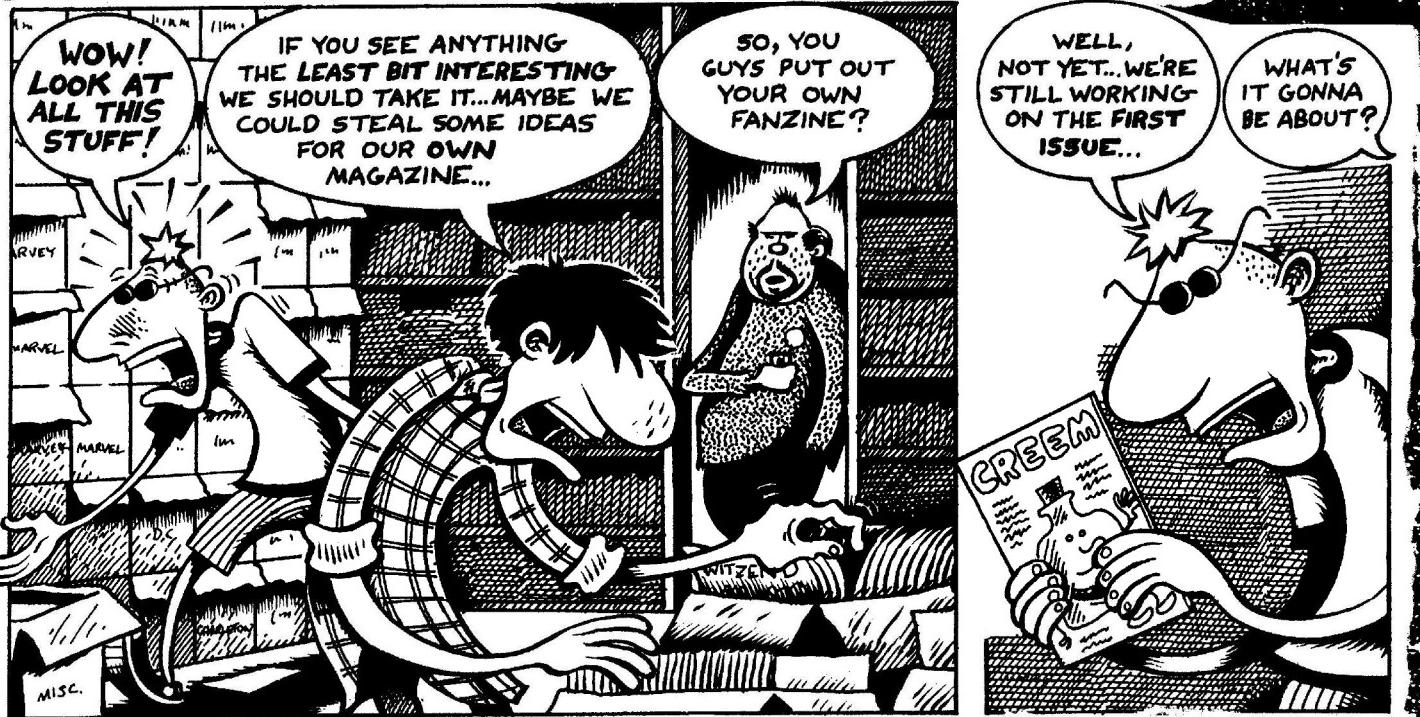
-WOW-

I'M GONNA START
MY OWN BAND

HM NO, I'M GONNA
START MY OWN ZINE
INSTEAD



"I've always been confused by why what music you listen to would dictate what kind of clothes you wear or what color your hair is. If there's a philosophy in the music you like, you can live by that, but I don't see why you have to be part of a clique, a scene, a movement." (Jeff Mentges, No Trend)"



RATCHARGE # 21. JUNE 2010. IT'S THE FUTURE & WE'RE STILL ALIVE.

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<http://ratcharge.blogspot.com>

Write for a mailing address. I don't know where I live.

Playlist for this issue: NEO BOYS – EP. LOU REED – walk on the wild side. THE ROLLING STONES – paint it black. TYRADES – dance like a maniac. PERIPHERIQUE EST – qui va me croire. FIRMEZA 10 – opresion. JOHN COLTRANE – I'm old fashioned. Cigarettes. Pastas. Dumb shit.

1. MY MIND IS LIKE A PLASTIC BAG

Once again the cover for this issue was drawn by Nagawika, a parisian metalhead corrupted by the negative power of hardcore punk and, in my opinion, a great fucking artist. One more time, thanks a lot man. As some of you will have noticed it depicts a SEX VID gig. As most of you won't have noticed, that gig is happening in France. While I'd assume that S/V is already old news to some of the ADHD australian hardcore children reading this publication, they weren't to the french audience when they played Paris and Lyon in December 2009, and a lot of minds got blown away. Prior to the show I had no idea what to expect – the records definitely had their moments but were far from being all killer, and the unfortunate hype machine surrounding the band had gotten a bit embarrassing, which even if it surely doesn't seem to be the band's fault, made me feel really suspicious about seeing them live. If they would have been average it would have proven something about hype being shit, if you know what I mean, and in that sense I will slightly embarrassingly admit that I was kinda hoping they would suck, just to be able to say "oh man, SEX VID, so fucking over-rated", etc, etc. Just go against the flow, be a rat in a room full of mice, you know? But I'm afraid I'm gonna have to be one of these wimpy tiny white mice one more time and tell you that they turned out to be the best band I've witnessed live in 2009 (a year that included six weeks of touring with hardcore bands) and one of the best hardcore bands I've ever seen live, period. The gig was noisy, loud as hell,

intense, disturbing; it was incredibly VIOLENT, it didn't feel "retro", they created an atmosphere that was unmistakably their own and more importantly than all of the above it didn't feel like an act: it sounded completely genuine and real, two of the most crucial things for any type of music to move any decent person's hearts/ guts/ souls/ brains/ cocks/ cunts/ wallets, and the two things that are lacking in so many other bands these days, hardcore, punk or other. This was one of my very last gig of the 00s, a decade I spent writing punk zines, playing in punk bands, touring the european punk circuit, hanging out and sometimes living in filthy punk squats and semi-consciously radically alienating myself from the world outside of that little bubble I considered home. Thinking about this on the last weeks of 2009 was a mixed bag: if I had to do it all over again I'd go for it, but there's a few mistakes I wouldn't want to repeat. Which ones? I'll spare you the details. Let's just say the past decade ended with a one-way ticket and the new one started in a tent in the australian bush, trying to sleep while some terrible electro-dance music was blasting out of a nearby stereo, australian jocks were drinkin' & drivin' and koalas were making insane noises resembling more those of wild boars than what you'd expect to come out of such cute little furry'n'stoned animals, all the while dealing with a new concept I hadn't fully identified yet: a slightly disturbing albeit minor case of identity crisis. It got me thinking (just a lil' bit, mind you, my brain cells still being as fried as ever) about how we define and contract who we are in those underground circles, usually by picking a sub-sub-genre of a sub-genre of rock'n'roll and adopting the suitable clothes, ideas, favorite bands and social circle to go along with it. I've been

guilty of that, to a degree, and I'm not interested anymore. At the risk of it sounding like the most nauseating dulldulldull commonplace thing I've written this year I don't want to be a garage-rocker, a crusty, an art-school dropout, a drunk, an activist, a macho hardcore boy, a modern glue-sniffer, a nerd, an indie-rocker, what have you, I don't want to pick and choose a pre-made identity that's already been constructed and digested for me to easily consume, mommy mommy mommy I just want to be a motherfuckin' human being if that's not asking too much! (It is, and that's the point). One thing I've learned in the first decade of my post-teenage life is that things usually aren't as simple as they seem and nothing's ever black or white. If what I just said made any sense, I dunno, but I hope this issue somehow reflects what I meant anyway: you get retarded synth-punk, noisy garage-rock, dumb hardcore, acid-wave drum & bass shit, (modestly) questioning chaos and capitalism and more, all in the same bag, all different spices to the same bowl of two-minute noodles as always served with no ads, no computer layouts, no ass-kissing and no other intention than to share some noise that I find inspiring in these depressing times. I fucking hate writing in english so I'll leave it at that for today. Thanks to Brendon for splitting this with me and handling all the photocopying and monetary aspect of it, that shit is just plain boring and I'm a 21st century middle-class bum. I hope you enjoy this issue and I might see you on the sidewalk outside the bar when I go out of my cave. I'll bring the cigarettes if you bring the beers.

2. PERFORMING REVOLUTION

The Shit-Fi website recently runned an article about Performing Revolution, "a performing arts festival in New York marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe". It was written by Aleksandra Herbich, who also does the fanzine Quality Control. It was a thought-provoking read and I ended up asking her two questions about it, which she kindly answered. Here are said answers along with the referenced excerpts from the article.

EXCERPT # 1 : *"It is only when oppressive regimes make themselves seen with clear boundaries, in this case the Communist states' cultural police and censors carrying out Soviet orthodoxy, that dissident art can bloom, and this is also why ultimately the Communist regime had an expiration date whereas our capitalist one continues to run our lives."*

QUESTION # 1 : If I understand correctly, what you say is that things have to get worst to get better, ie if governments in the West started to use more actual, non-hidden brutal methods of repression and censorship, making it obvious that they have turned into semi-dictatorships, then there would be more chances of capitalism having an "expiration date"?

ANSWER # 1: I try not to set up linear perspectives or hierarchies of what is 'better' or 'worse'. To do so is to succumb to a type of history that supports a capitalist view in the first place by following utopian ways of thinking and/or millennialism/millenarianism. Capitalism relies on change in order to continue which is also why its incredibly difficult to pin down or identify actual systems of oppression, unlike in Soviet Communism and other totalitarian regimes where it is quite obvious, making the latter easier to oppose if you wanted to, or rather

SET UP AESTHETIC AND BEHAVIOURAL OPPOSITIONS.

Capitalism will never use more obvious methods of oppression, in fact it is getting smarter at what it does every day and it is unlikely that it will collapse fully within our lifetimes, however the best way to reveal its boundaries and inherent contradictions is to create blockages in the flow of goods/money/etc. and this is why I listen to DIY music, collect records and try to acquire non-

expendable things. For example electronics become more complicated and made cheaper which makes them more likely to break and quicker to replace, speeding up the flow of production and demand whilst the knowledge to repair them appears at a greater distance from the consumer. If you buy a piece of technology and keep fixing it, altering it yourself or with friends, then you are creating a blockage that works in contra to what capitalism needs. I guess I have gone a little off point here but I thought it necessary to give some context as to how I view Capitalism and therefore what I meant in my sentence.

Soviet Communism had an expiration date and I attribute it to its visibility in part, causing an already patriotic people to take action and fuck shit up. Whether Capitalism will end or mutate into something else like Feudalism did over an almost 400 year period who knows and to think in these terms is again linear. By causing 'blockages' one can at least become self-aware of capitalism's hold in everyday life and slow it down in at least your immediate sphere of influence. Basically my sentence meant, Capitalism works this way and Soviet Communism worked that way in the context of visibility.

EXCERPT # 2 : (...) Another strategy was the instigation of chaos against a society based on strict codes of order, as seen through the rise of improvisational theatre and performance art. Punk, jazz, metal, rock 'n' roll and any number of permutations in between had chaos as part of their stylistic DNA and probably accounted for their immense popularity during this time."

QUESTION # 2 : I'm interested in the use of the word "chaos" here, and would like to know what's your definition of it. I could be wrong but it seems you've got some thought about how "chaos" (which tends to be regarded as a negative thing by a lot of people) is needed against government control. If so, I'd like to hear your thoughts as it's something I've always felt strongly about without being able to put it into words.

ANSWER # 2 : In this sentence I meant chaos as an aesthetic type, or rather the appearance of chaos, as any connoisseur of jazz/punk/metal etc. does not consider these genres as intrinsically chaotic and find their sound quite comprehensible. It all depends on who is the reader. For some commie bureaucrat or Wagner loving Nazi jazz/duopunk/metal/punk were pretty scary as they did not fit into an ordered aesthetics that relied on clear cut visible hierarchies of phrases and tropes. You couldn't even write most of the songs down and they were written on the spot through improvisation or just speedy songwriting by people who had not gone to school for such things, at least for punk and metal. The government therefore had no say in their formation. Therefore for the dominant classes in Soviet Bloc countries, this was the very essence of chaos and their free-flow between consumers through illegal tapes and concerts just made them even more out of the control of the government and more desired by them to be either shut down or to become controllable in some way e.g. picking suitable punk songs for production on the state label. Chaos for Capitalism would probably be something completely different and I am not sure if it is a strong enough counterpoint to the aesthetic of its structuring structures because as I wrote in number 1., it is a much more intricate beast and we also have the added disadvantage of being in it as opposed to the magic of hindsight and historical analysis!

(Read more at <http://www.shit-fi.com/performingrevolution>)

3. DISCHARGE

"The whole point of Discharge was not to "rock." Discharge were a very abstract, cool-looking, almost inconceivably arty, monotone, and minimalist outfit. They weren't into tattoos or brass knuckles or sad/tough fonts. Discharge invented a timeless form of hardcore at a single stroke, by detaching melody, narrative, musicality, emotion, attitude, etc. FROM punk, reducing it to Stooges-levels of dumbed-down-high-concept. Discharge are an anthem, a protest—anything but a haphazard assemblage of rock clichés. In truth, Discharge are much more in the tradition of the Stooges, the Ramones, and Motorhead, than most any of the bands subsequent to them (although it remains a task to interpret this essence correctly)." (Ben Parker)



4. MC MONKEY & APE WITH ATTITUDE



Recorded in 2004 and released early 2005 by Kryptonite Records, "Human Zoo", the sole record by MC MONKEY & APE WITH ATTITUDE, is an amazing deranged piece of retardo caveman synth-punk in two parts completed with organ, cowbells, weird sound effects and a frantic feeling of total insanity, a one of a kind record that could actually make you take your brain outta your skull and throw it against a wall if you'd listen to it one too many times on the wrong (or right) day. I tried to learn more about this fine piece of wax, which lead to getting in touch with the two idiot-savants behind this degenerated mess, Brad X and Roy Oden, who both used to play in the infamous 90s nihilist garage band LAST SONS OF KRYPTON. I asked them questions about the record itself as well as their teenage years in a shithole named Manitowoc in Wisconsin and other more or less relevant shit that I compiled in the fine following paragraphs together with some reviews of the records taken from various sources. Read it, then order the record and dance like a maniac.

REVIEW # 1 (TRAKMARX)

You think I'm making these records up don't you? This here is some ugly, degenerate music played by ugly, degenerate people. If the John Belushi character from 'National Lampoon's Animal House' had overdosed on a diet of 'Born Bad' compilations and cheap speed, this might be the record he would have made. I particularly care for the bit where the arcade machine noises come out of nowhere for no clear reason into the midst of the 60s trash-garage breakout. Reminds me of those dub records where you get a recording of a space invaders machine dropped into the cavernous mix. Demented.

ROY - INTRO

Hey, my name's Roy Oden. I like obnoxious music. I was born in San Diego and my parents moved to Manitowoc when I was three. I was a crazy kid. Really hyper and without much logic. I started listening to punk music when I was about 15. My friend R.J. (LSOK singer) turned me onto some really cool bands like the Stooges, Angry Samoans, Suicide Commandos, etc... We used to hangout on the side of the 7-11 mini-mart and insult the customers coming in and out and once in awhile someone would buy us underagers cigarettes or beer. We'd do this shit until 3-4 in the morning. I was 16 and had already been kicked outta school for about a year. There wasn't much to do in Manitowoc. I kinda adopted some of the dumber things associated with punk but the music really got to me. I wanted to learn more and more about it.

BRAD X - INTRO.

I'm Brad X. I was on the cover of MaximumRocknRoll back in 1996 with my band, Last Sons of Krypton. I have lived in Manitowoc County, WI, USA for the vast majority of my life. I discovered punk from a cassette compilation I bought when I was 13 that had THE DICTATORS, HEARTBREAKERS, CLASH, and stuff like that on it. Right around the same time the Rhino Records DIY series was coming out. I remember getting all those on cassette when they came out. All this was pre-internet and if you wanted to hear a band, you actually had to find a physical copy of their music. Not like now where anyone can download whatever they want.

BANDS I PLAYED IN (BRAD X)

Tantrums. Last Sons Of Krypton. The Creatures. The Evolutions. MC Monkey and Ape with Attitude. The Smuts. Suave Motherfuckers. Ivan and the Terribles. Garbage Party.

BANDS I PLAYED IN + MORE (ROY)

Here's the Manitowoc bands. The Evolutions, Last Sons of Krypton, Thee Insects, Dirty Needles, Prescription Pills, The Dropouts, and Joan Phifer and the Twinkys. I was in a two piece girl/guy band in Milwaukee called The Reacharounds. Played some songs on the Milky Ways CD that came out on Alive a couple years ago. There should be a 7" from some of the unused songs called El Dorrito Dan y los Puke Eyes coming out hopefully in the next year or two. Hope to be doing some more releases with my label Kryptonite Records in the near future too.

MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN (ROY)

Manitowoc has a smell to it. It's not a pleasant smell. Kinda a factory smog stink mixed with armpit sweat. It's a town of about 35,000 people. When I was there it was over 95% white. The biggest minority was kinda strangely for the mid-west Vietnamese people. In grade school we'd spend the recesses playing smear the queer vietnamese kids vs white kids. We had hard footballs, baseballs, rubber balls and stones to throw. Kids were getting hurt pretty bad and eventually someone got stabbed and that ended the recesses for awhile. The town was pretty racist and the cops were total jerks to punks. Most of the people I hung out with in town when I was a teenager ended up going to jail or on SSI. I lived there from 3 to 21 years old. Being a punk there was ok, you'd hear people yell shit out the car at you like "Devo" or "faggot". There was some fun times too. Being in a band made it easier to get girls, free beer and pot and some of the parties lasted days. I don't think I'd be the same person if I'd grown up anywhere else for better or worse.

MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN (ROY)

Manitowoc's the armpit of America.

MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN (BRAD X)

I still live in Manitowoc County. It's not the armpit of America. People vacation here in the summer, they travel from the big cities to get away from it all. We are located on the shores of one of the largest bodies of fresh water on earth, Lake Michigan. Its a beautiful coastal area with unique geography and landmarks.

I guess the main thing that was tough was that it was actually cool to be a hardcore punk when we were in high school, but we hated those kids. There is only one high school, and you are around the same kids for all your youth. The kids who got into hardcore were all the assholes and jocks. We were into real punk long before them, yet were subject to ridicule because they didn't understand what their own roots were.

MC MONKEY & APE WITH ATTITUDE (BRAD X)

I am Ape With Attitude, I played cowbell and organ on that record, and wrote the organ riff it's centered around. I also recorded it. Me and Roy (MC Monkey) from THE EVOLUTIONS recorded that back in 2003 when he was living in my basement. THE EVOLUTIONS LP is about half songs by me and Roy recorded during that same time period.

REVIEW # 2 (DUSTED MAGAZINE)

Jesus Christ! Where the hell did this come from? Super-stupid punk noise attack from Wisconsin. Renegade shit-fi frat-rock (in the Sam the Sham sense) sped up and littered with screams, cowbell, and lasers that often drown out the song itself. This could have come out in the late '70s or early '80s, when weirdos would just cough out some indigestibly awesome noise blar for guys like Hyped2Death's Chuck Warner to rediscover decades later. I especially like how the mayhem stops abruptly on side 1 and picks up just as suddenly on the flipside. Manic of energy and retarded of reason. No contact info listed, but I suppose if you really were in the market for this sort of record, it would likely have found you already. (no contact listed)

MC MONKEY & APE WITH ATTITUDE (BRAD X)

Basically, Roy was listening to some SCREAMERS and asked if I could play one of their songs. Well, I dont really know how to play organ, but I did have an

Monkey - Vox, Guitar, Drums, Sound Effects

old hammond in my living room so I started plunking out this riff. We decided we weren't capable of covering anything they did, but he liked what I was playing so I recorded about 10 minutes of us jamming, just organ and drums. We never used the organ live in a band at that time, so we were actually in different rooms of the house.

Afterwards he overdubbed guitar, and while he did vocals, I was banging a cowbell in the background. I didn't have headphones so I couldn't hear the music, that's why it's so free form. The gun was a toy from Family Dollar. It cost \$5, and that was during a time we were really broke and my wife thought I was insane for buying it. It looked like something out of Flash Gordon, all shiny and gold and LOUD AS FUCK!!! I think we got the idea to incorporate it into the song from GASOLINE's goner single.

MC MONKEY & APE WITH ATTITUDE (ROY)

The song was ripped off "Life Stinks" by ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS. I was listening to it like crazy at the time as I was living in Officer Brad's basement. It was February 2004. Life beyond stunk, I was leaving Milwaukee and had a credit card with over 10 grand on it. I had been talking with Officer Brad/Amber and they wanted me to stay with them. I knew it was a terrible idea but was getting unemployment and wanted to be able to keep calling it in for a benefactor. I was promised a room to sleep in. Didn't happen, after picking me up, Amber casually mentioned "oh yeah, you're in the basement". I was 20 miles outta Milwaukee and didn't feel like saying "what the fuck". You can't argue with animals like that. It was too late to go back it seemed. Whatever, I've been through worse shit anyways.

The basement was unheated and got below freezing every night. I took the attitude of just drink more and I won't notice. It kinda worked too. I was writing terrible, over compensating, depressing, horseshit songs which ended up being some of the "Go Too Far" record on No Fuckin' Chance Records. The stuff stunk, I knew Human Zoo was good though, a messed up piece of fuck if I've ever heard one.

REVIEW #3 (TERMINAL BOREDOM)

Roy Oden and Brad X (of ex-Last Sons of Krypton Fame) shit out a sloppy, insane mess of repetitive Killed By Retardation that spans two sides o' one 45. I read a "UFO Dictator" comparison somewhere, and it makes total sense, 'cept this actually sounds like a couple apes monkeyfucking around, like two amped-up primates frantically jerking off on top of a cowbell, a toy ray gun, a keyboard and a warped copy of the Tampax/Hitler \$6 split. Opens with a ferocious keys hook and collapses in total disaster. And it's great! Not for everybody, but the ones who "get it" will love it. (EL)

THE RECORDING SESSION (ROY)

To record, I set up all the shit and mikes and whatever. Officer Brad didn't feel like recording that day. We did a take. It stunk, couldn't even hold together the ripped off riff. I convinced Officer Brad to do another take. I just felt like playing on and on and I think it was over seven minutes long. To prove that he had

fucked up the last take I wanted to make it go on and on. I wrote the lyrics after playing the instrumental version on headphones while walking around in Manitowoc for about an hour. It was fucking below zero with the wind chill. The cold and my negative mindset and some flap in the breeze shit made the lyrics as they were. I'm glad people like it. It was a not fun time. It kinda got through.

THE RECORDING SESSION (BRAD X)

Roy has posted his own version of events, and I don't remember clearly enough to argue with him, so I will assume it was a day where I felt like shit and didn't want to do anything. I probably was up late the night before partying, and then had to wake up early in the morning to go to work. I worked with my dad doing a hard physical job, and would often come home exhausted and sore. I would usually try to lay down for a couple hours, but inevitably Roy would be pounding on my door wanting to be entertained. After a long day of sleeping and doing nothing, he could hardly wait to do something. He had recently broken up with a long time girlfriend and was always having a bad time.

I probably had him set up the mics and didn't get involved until it was time to set levels. That's where I was then, and I am somewhat ashamed now at how bad of a drunk I was then. As fucked up as I am still, it was even worse then. I would hardly be functional until late at night. He would've set up all the mics and made sure they were working before I stepped in and set up the levels and EQ. Roy was the engineer, I was the producer.

REVIEW #4 (MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL)

Modern bands will forever attempt to emulate the sounds of KBD-era one-hit wonders and the sometimes bafflingly incredible ineptitude that lonesome punks of that age would create operating in backwoods vacuums where no one really knew what punk was yet, so they just made up whatever they thought it should be. And unfailingly, the modern bands going that route always come up short. Except for this one shining moment, nearly TAMPAX-ian in its no-fo brilliance. The authentic sounds of two alcoholics locked in a Manitowoc house with a tape deck, one organ riff, some guitars, a cowbell, half a drum kit, a toy ray gun and nothing better to do. This isn't two hipsters attempting to make the next "UFO Dictator", it's two social misfits actually doing it. One sprawlily repetitive, epic spread over two sides, dedicated to all their friends: "YOU PEOPLE ARE BEAUTIFUL! AIIMIGHHHHHH!" This is the record that nerds in the year 2021 will be having their minds blown by. (Chuck Barrels)

HUMAN ZOO - THE LYRICS (ROY)

I scribbled these down on a piece of paper:

LIFE IN THE HUMAN ZOO, I'M BORED THERE'S NOTHING
TO DO, ANOTHER DAY AND NOTHING NEW, WELCOME
TO LIFE IN THE HUMAN ZOO, PHONE IN A BOMBTHREAT
JUST FOR FUN, FUN, FUN, FUN, PUBLIC ENEMY
NUMBER ONE, WE GOT TERRORISTS ON THE RUN, NOT
QUIET HUMAN, MODERN AMERICAN, A DIFFERENT ANIMAL
ALTOGETHER, ROBOTIC, ROBOT, ANAGRAM LEATHER, CAN'T
GET IT TOGETHER

After I got done with those there was still about 4 minutes to fill up. So it was kinda flap in the breeze shit like saying "I'm bored, there's nothing to do" or "I just want to hear that god damn radar gun" there's even a nod to Frank Sinatra. It was put in with sarcasm.

AFTER THE RECORDING SESSION (BRAD X)

Roy moved to California, and a year later he showed up back in town and said his boyfriend Martin from the sores was helping him put it out. I was fairly irritated, as I thought the whole thing was a piece of shit at the time, and I had a legit LP in the works, and here he was releasing our garbage tracks, and even our decent tracks (Dirty Needles) without my permission. I recorded this shit, I converted it to digital, and played on it, and he was dealing with people behind my back and ready to release shit quality mp3 sourced vinyl. At that point I hopped onboard, and provided decent quality WAV files for both releases. I was only concerned that the band name was something other than THE EVOLUTIONS, because I didn't want to fuck up our album deal. The name was fine, one of our old bands was supposed to be called "STUPID MONKEY FUCKERS" and I have never shied away from the fact that I am a cave man.

REVIEW # 5 (TERMINAL BOREDOM)

I'm not sure how much of my affection for this single comes from the fact that it was produced by Roy Kryptonite/Evolution/Oden and Brad X (Last Sons of Krypton), but this sounds so stupid and pointless to my ears that it achieves some kind of trash rock art piece presentation. I mean, think Mr. California or Jellybean and the Moustaches-level "why did they bother to put this on vinyl," add raygun blips and imagine a nutcase in a Manitowoc basement swinging his arms around and spit-screaming about ripping faces off and boredom. Part I is actually a great KBD-style tune that degenerates (by Part II) into calls for "more radar gun," horrified screams and various other noises, over the in-and-out beat/melody. Great record!

REVIEW # 6 (BRAD X)

[At first] I didn't like the Human Zoo record because I felt it wasn't as strong as the other material we worked on pretty much every day, like the songs that ended up on the Dirty Needles EP. I didn't like it because it was a studio creation, and not something we could do live. I liked the songs I thought he wrote, but some of the ones I thought were best at the time turned out to have been stolen from Jamie Evolution. I think my musical strengths are on drums and guitar and I played neither on the record. I thought Roys playing was inept, and I didn't recognize the quality of the improv we had laid down. It's only after hearing it over and over again year after year that I began to recognize some of its brilliance. For example, I never even really listened to the words until last week.

NOTE: At the time of the interview (March 2010) copies of the record were still available from Roy, who wrote: "Hey people, I got some copies left of Human Zoo, if you want them. \$7 post paid or if someone out there wants more I could work on a wholesale price. I also have DIRTY NEEDLES and REACHAROUNDS 7"s I could wholesale. I hope many of you order this record so as I can continue to make recordings that sound like shit, recordings that sell like shit. My e-mail's royoden@hotmail.com"

5.INSERVIBLES

"Our main influence is failure, we love it."

LOS INSERVIBLES are a hardcore band from Mexico City that sounds menacing, disturbed and slightly evil, a word I don't use often to describe music I like. Their vocals have the same deranged vibe that made early RAW POWER stand out and the obvious assumed negativity of their tunes reminds a Mexican NERORGASMO. Their two self-released demo are being re-released on vinyl as we speak in France and the USA. Someone should send them a credit card to release their LP.

How and when did the band start and what have you released so far? How did the members meet, where you all friends before the band started or did you just hook up for this band? How and why did you choose to call yourself "Useless"?

Kuble: The band started with Yecal and Borrego, I met them about 3 or maybe 4 years ago but we didn't hang out together very often, about 2 years ago I tried to put together this crappy Goth band and some guys told me about Benjas and he joined us... I asked Yecal if we could rehearse in their place since they had amps and a drum kit, the rehearsal and the final result of the Goth band was so lame that for some reason we (Benjas and I) ended up joining INSERVIBLES.

Yecal: It started as a serious thing like a year and a half ago since Benjas and Kuble joined Borrego and I, before that we just played shitty wannabe Killed By Death songs trying to fit into Mexico city punk scene just because we wanted free booze and impressing girls, but none of that occurred. We have released 2 tapes that people liked quite well so now both tapes are now 7", one on Hbps-2x records in the USA and our first tape on Shogun records from France. Borrego

and I were friends since high school, I've been playing with him since we were like 16 years old in different horrible bands. I met Kuble because he was Goth and he played in a really awful deathrock band nobody remembers, we met Benjas because of a friend who wanted to rehearse in our practice room. We are really good friends and spend more time drinking and having fun than practicing since there are no gigs in this city we mainly rehearse just to record. We choose Inservibles (Useless) just as a tribute to 80s Spanish bands such as Desechables or Espasmoidicos. It also sounds nihilistic and shit.

Tell us about Mexico City. What kind of jobs do you do there and what are your hobbies? Would you live somewhere else if you could? What about the music scene, any bands worth mentioning?

Y: Musically Mexico City fucking sucks, the only good things are cheap good food and you can get cheap booze 24 hours a day, I study anthropology, Borrego slave-works at a news network, Benjas sells credits at this housing project office. I like to draw shit that sometimes is used as artwork for my friends or Inservibles, you can see my stuff at putosmodernospabasura.blogspot.com. We all like getting really drunk while listening to Qloaca Letal till the sun comes up. Actually Mexico city is a really fun place to live, despite the shitty music scene, the crooked cops messing with young people and crime being a huge problem you can have lots of fun, there's this new fashion statement for poor kids that consists in worshiping San Judas, the saint of robbers, corrupted cops and people in prison or worshiping Santa Muerte, listening to techno and reggaeton, riding scooters and snifing paint thinner while robbing people, they are the craziest people, the older ones are like 17 years old and really know how to have a good time even though everybody is afraid of them.

Punk scene in Mexico City is pretty dead, the only band I like from here is Crimen, they are really cool and not pretentious. Every other band from the city plays generic d-beat crust shit or tough jock hxc. Another good band but from Guadalajara is Los Monjo, they play this classic Spanish punk, they have some 7" out there. There are other cool bands from other states like Los Nassis from Puebla, they are one of the funniest live bands, they are brown guys dressed with KKK hoods and doing stupid things while playing punk. I think I wouldn't live anywhere else because when I'm drunk and I'm peeing in the streets, cops come and try to get me in jail but you just give 'em like 30 pesos and they don't care anymore. It's a great city to be stupid.

K: I'm currently leading a project on DNA-Mediated Self-Assembly of Artificial Vesicles. My hobbies include jerking off and playing videogames... and yes I can't wait to get out of this shithole.

What's your relationship with current Mexican bands such as XYX and RATAS DEL VATICANO? Do you often share bills? Is there much interest for these bands in Mexico at the moment?

Y: Ratas Del Vaticano are our friends and we have toured Mexico together, David taught me how to record properly, we have also traveled all the way to Monterrey just to play with them. I've also designed t-shirts and record covers for them, they are really cool, last week I went with them as a "roadie" to SXSW, actually I think I was the worst roadie ever. We love those vatos. I'm not really into XYX but I like them, Mou, the drummer mixed our first demo tape, he's really cool.

The real interest for Mexican punk bands happens outside the country, nobody but ourselves care for us, there are no gigs, punks are too busy listening to Wolfpack and sewing patches to their pants than supporting local stuff. In their hometown Monterrey, Ratas Del Vaticano are often called posers and shit just because they shower or punks call em "fresas" because they like to have good shows with good equipment, paying the bands and selling merch so go figure out how's the scene down here.

K: I haven't personally met XYX but Ratas are some awesome vatos.

How hard is it for you guys to cross the border and go play gigs in the USA? Did you ever play outside of Mexico? What are your live shows usually like, do you try to get a reaction from the crowd or do you mainly play for yourselves?

K: It's not hard to cross the border, we know a couple of coyotes with excellent references... the thing is the booking stuff. I usually don't give a fuck about the crowd's reaction, mankind ain't ready for us anyway.

Y: The only problem for us to tour USA is money, you know, our horrible Mexican Pesos ain't worth shit up there, but that's something we are planning for real, maybe one of these days you will have four Mexico City assholes peeing in your alleys and telling you stupid jokes. We have only played Mexico, we were planning this Peruvian tour, maybe it's going to happen. We try to put our best at live shows, trying to play killer shows and shit but most of the time nobody cares about us since some European grind crust band is the main band and people just want to see the foreign blonde gods and don't care about the brown average guys screaming at the top of their lungs hahaha. Sometimes I mess with the audience just to get reactions making fun of Mexican punks, this has lead into trouble but I think it's fun, there was one time when Borrego and I were 17 years old and had a band called La Experiencia Paranormal del Bebe and we were playing an

anarko punk venue, people was really pissed because we started playing Hombres G (a Spanish pop band) songs and Ramones blitzkrieg bop switching the lyrics to Hey Ho Seigh Hail so the guys with Mohawks got angry and tried to beat the shit out of us. Some people labeled us as a nazi band after that, how funny is that? A Mexican nazi pop band. I think Mexico is one of the most racist countries in the world, you know? Nobody here thinks about it so, sometimes it's cool to remind them that they are a bunch of assholes hating their own heritage but claiming to be open minded punks and intelligent people. Fuck em.

What influences the sound of INSERVIBLES? Old bands? New bands? Substances? Food? Movies? Daily life? Why use your free time to play twisted, dark, deranged sounding hardcore music when you could be watching TV or playing soccer instead?

K : Old bands, new bands, free porn websites, cheap booze, junk food, our monumental success with females, shit and yes daily life with all its goodies!

Y : We all like old Mexican punk such as Ley Rota, Herejia, SS20, Psicodencia and I'm into Italian stuff like Indigesti, Raw Power, Nerorgasmo, we love Rudimentary Peni, Void, United Mutation, Necros, Peruvian punk; Narcosis, Eutanasia, all kinds of shit; 45 grave, No Trend, Aburadako, GG Allin. Our first influence is 80s Spanish punk as I said before, we listen a lot IV Reich, HHH, RIP, Larsen, Siniestro Total. Current bands like Über from Spain are killer,

Vaaska from Texas, the Daily Void from Chicago, etc. we also love Ricky Luis, Control Machete, Christian Death and Los Picadientes de Caborca. We drink a lot of Tonayan mezcal which is the cheapest mezcal around. You get 1 litro for less than 2 dollars and it's enough to get 4 hard drinking persons shitfaced, this shit is drank by 2 different kinds of people; homeless guys and youngsters with no money. Junk food is a very important part of our life, we are big fans of Tacos el Primo, near my house, those tacos are the greatest tacos in southern Mexico City, you can see transsexual prostitutes and crazy cab drivers eating there, so you can't go wrong. Our main influence is failure, we love it. Borrego played soccer and works for the TV so... that's weird. Our main goal is to appear on TV playing at a Mexico vs. USA halftime show at FIFA WORLD CUP.



Do you consider your music as art? Why/ why not?

K : Sure, why not.

Y : Nah it's not art, we only play fast songs trying to get free beer, release records and meet girls.

What are your lyrics about and are they of any importance to you? What (if any) kind of message are you trying to convey through INSERVIBLES?

Y : Lyrics are about neglected people in our city, not in a political point of view but a pessimistic one, making fun of our people because it's stupid and likes to be mistreated, we also write about homeless guys having apocalyptic delusions, hating everybody, telling anarko punks to stop "fighting the power" ha!, we also write about shit that have happened to us in this weird city like watching girls being raped by gangs and the police is laughing at them. I think the lyrics are kind of important because is the reflex of our way of life, we are maybe insensitive because we are surrounded by poverty and crime so we don't believe in anything but having good times with our friends and making fun of our shitty situation. We don't try to send any message, we just talk about what's going on with a cynical view.

K : We always try to incorporate all fields of human knowledge in our songs... our message is very complex, even for us to understand.

How can people hear your noise and what are your upcoming projects?

Y : You can listen to our shit in myspace.com/inservibles, there's a one sided 7" coming soon on Leather Bar Records and maybe another one on Shogun Records, we are trying to release an LP but nobody is taking the risk ha. I'm trying to put out the first Mexican record label with some friends so hopefully next month a compilation with Mexican and Peruvian bands its gonna be ready. You can reach me at rotten_hoodoo(at)hotmail(dot)com

6.FLEURS

I had been living in Lyon for about two years when I first heard of FLEURS, that the rumor described as some local kids playing raw, primitive, one-two-one-two blown out modern garage punk. I went to check them out in the tiny basement of a bar in the fancy part of town and was blown away – they played like shit that night, and it was everything I had hoped for: distorted to fuck loud as hell teenage caveman rock music with a retarded vibe that made me feel like hitting my head against the walls and running in circles the same way bands like STATE CHILDREN, early DISCHARGE or early LEBENDEN TOTEN do. It was a wake-up call in a way, because I had been hoping for this kind of band to appear in the french "DIY punk" (for lack of a better term) scene for years and just randomly found it somewhere I hadn't been looking, in another "scene" I had previously dismissed for no other reason than not having the same black & white aesthetics or something equally embarrassing. Fuck me, right? And once you're done doing that you should go and download the FLEURS demo, especially if you like french speed-sniffing prehistoric garage shit like THE FATALS and LES HULKS. Thanks to Jay-Reatard-fan-wanna-be-neo-hippie Luca for answering these questions in one day, something that only happened to me once before in ten years, when I interviewed fucking George Tabb of all people. I'm not even sure FLEURS is still band at this point, but Luca is still active in his equally great neo-wave band SIDA. Shit, there's not much else to say really. Go start your own band.

So Jay Reatard died yesterday. Anything to say about that?

He is not dead.

How & when did FLEURS start? Did you play in other bands before, and what made you want to start playing in a band in the first place? What was the original goal (if there was any)? Do you think you fulfilled it by now?

Fleurs started in 2007. I had another band before, called Late!, in which I sang & played drums. I was doing it with my best friend when we were both fifteen. We played some kind of extremely basic 1-chord-and-a-half-per song punk rock. After one year of existence, a few shows and two demos, my friend started not coming to practices, he was not into playing music anymore, so I decided to learn guitar & start a new band. In the beginning I wanted it to be a noise band. A friend introduced me to Jonathan, who was Fleurs' first drummer. Then Arinabelle (who also played in Late) joined, the Jonathan left because we didn't sound like Slipknot, then François joined. Sorry, I don't know how to make this story interesting.

As long as I can remember I have always wanted to play in a band. I tried to form my first band when I was 8, I was playing violin at that time. It didn't last long.

The original goal with Fleurs was to play guitar in a band. I think it's kind of fulfilled.

The recording of your second demo is really raw and noisy to say the least. Why did you want it that way? Coming from more of a "hardcore" background than a "garage" one, this recording just reminds me more of fucked up sounding Japanese noisecore bands like TRANQUILIZER or STAGNATION than of a regular garage band. Are you familiar with these bands? What "garage" bands, if any, influenced you to sound like that? Do you feel comfortable being called a "garage" band or would you define FLEURS with another term?

Shit, I don't know, I have always had a very precise idea of how Fleurs should sound, but I can't fucking manage to reach this idea. Fleurs is supposed to be a psychedelic punk band! I am not very familiar with the bands you are talking about, noisecore is something a bit new to me, except for Gauze, Confuse & one or two other "classic" noisecore bands. The bands that influenced me the most in wanting to sound like that are The Fatalists and Les Hulks, I guess. When I listened to them for the first time, I was sixteen and only knew about shitty generic punk-rock such as the "Give 'em the boot" comps or inept shit like that. I was so amazed by their sound, it was like I had been waiting for this my whole life. One or two years ago I would have been happy if someone told us we were a garage band, now I think I don't really care. I think I want our next recording to be much "cleaner" by the way, now that we've done the "raw" thing I'd like to try & record something different. We are supposed to be a psychedelic band.

At least two of the members are pretty young, and I feel like when I was your age I didn't know half as much about music as you do. How did you start being obsessed with music? Did you grow up in a music-friendly environment, like were you introduced to a lot of stuff by a family member, or did you just discover shit by yourself really young?

The three of us are 20 years old. I started being obsessed with music at a very young age (obsessed with very shitty music at that time). I grew up in a music-friendly environment for sure, but I was never "forced" into listening to the stuff my parents like. When I was old enough to understand that nu-metal sucked, I started digging in my parents' record collection, buying zines, records, downloading shit etc.

On a similar note I assume that you've discovered a lot of bands through downloading mp3s, right? How do you feel about people buying less and less records yet knowing more and more bands through the internet? I've got mixed feelings about it: on the one hand I feel like it's great when music is free, on the other hand I feel like everything being so goddamn easy to find tends to make people jaded and think of music as some disposable thing that you can just consume really fast and then throw away as fast as you ingested it, then download something else and so on. Can you imagine a world without records, just mp3s? Would you wanna live in that world?

When I started downloading, I quickly realized that I was doing what all downloaders do: downloading way too much stuff, stuff I'd never have the time to listen to. Now I download like one or two records a week, and when I really like them, I want to have them "for real". I'd hate a world without records, when I download something I really don't feel like I actually own it. A world where record covers are replaced with shitty 200x200 JPEGs? Come on, it would be worse than getting your penis cut & you know it.

In France it seems most people going to gigs are in their mid-twenties or thirties (as opposed to, say, the US, where it seems the average age for a punk is 15 years old). Why do you think that is? Can you relate to the older people at gigs, and do you think people are being nicer/more (or less?) friendly to you because of your age? Does that question suck?

That is because French teenagers are all fucking retarded. Here is a little story: when I was 14, I asked a guy with earphones what he was listening to, and he answered "I don't know, I just typed 'rap' in Emule and downloaded everything." Yeah, when we started going to gigs, we were the only people under 25 in the room (in fact we still are) and it was kind of uncomfortable. Some people acted like real dicks with us, others were nice & tried to help us discover new bands and shit. This question doesn't suck. Punk-rock grandpas that know everything better than me suck.

FLEURS is based in Lyon, a big city (at least by French standards). Luca, you recently moved to Strasbourg which seems way smaller. How would you compare the two cities and their music scenes? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of playing in a band in a big city, and in a smaller one?

In Lyon, and I suppose it's the same in all big cities, each micro-scene seems separated from the other, which isn't the case at all in Strasbourg, when you can go see a harshnoise band, a garage one and a pop solo project the same night. I also feel more comfortable at shows in Strasbourg than in Lyon, people don't seem to think they're part of a fucking elite or something.

Do your songs have any lyrics? I seem to remember they don't, which is strange. Is that intentional? Don't you have anything to say? Or is not having a message a message in itself?

Some songs do have lyrics, some don't, either because I'm too lazy to write them, either because the song doesn't need lyrics. Not having lyrics doesn't mean having nothing to say, people who think that are talking under the influence of shitty "political" bands with 50-page explanatory booklets in their records and should die.

Ten favorite records of the 2000s?

- Les Hulks' debut 7"
- Les Hulks "Pussy cola / I love you" 7"
- Black Time "Double negative" LP
- Hello Sunshine, cdr demo
- Out With A Bang "Love my life" 7"
- The Nirvana boxset
- The Anal "Total anal" LP (best artwork too)
- AH Kraken "Elle avait peut-être 19 ans mais pour moi elle en aura toujours 12" LP
- Reatards "Grown up, fucked up" LP
- XYX "Momento Acido Contemporaneo"

Anything you wanna add? A message to Australian readers?

Australian readers are handsome & intelligent and should buy our non-existent records. FLEURS will soon become a psychedelic band. Thank you for the interview. Listen to LES HULKS. Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir? Oulala. L'aube rouge des émeutes ne dissoud pas les créatures monstrueuses de la nuit. Manger le chatte c'est très bon. LSD is God.

<http://fleurs666.canalblog.com/>

7.XYX XYX

In an era of endless waves of revivals of all sorts oversaturating the subcultural market, coming across something genuine and non-ironically self-referential can be a hard task. Monterrey, Mexico's XYX unexpectedly landed under the radar of those paying attention to remind us of what hidden treasures punk still holds. And hidden treasures they are: by the time friends on our side of the ocean began to notice and frantically browse the web to find the records, they were long gone. But so it is, and from their first recorded-in-one-day-on-acid EP to the second, more sludgy one, you don't expect XYX to look back. Better hold your breath for what's next, instead.

On my last year's trip to Mexico, I made a 12 hour-long bus ride amongst snoring sleepers & screaming babies to see XYX play a house party with the equally great Ratas Del Vaticano in their hometown of Monterrey. This interview should have been conducted on the spot but you know how it is: once you're there, you start to meet people and chat, you have a beer then two, and you just don't feel like pulling out the tape recorder. Questions were sent later (March 2009) via email. (interview and intro by Julien Besse – previously published in french in issue # 7 of Heartbeat Zine)

How long has XYX been together? Is there any interesting story behind the two of you meeting?

Mou: We never intended to make a band together. Really! If 3 years ago you have appeared in a time machine and told me Anel and I will have a band in 2008 I would not believe it at all. But some things just have to happen, you know. It's like if the forces of evolution had some task for us and made things possible.

Anel: There are too many interesting facts about how we ended up in a band together, let's just say that everything we've lived together before XYX was part of a process so we could handle spending so much time together now, making records; and be professional and passionate at the same time, something that it's hard when you spend 70% of your time with one person. We're both perfectionists and disciplined in what we like, and I call it a blessing that we dropped acid together that day, when all this started.

What was your first exposure to underground music? Were there local Monterrey bands that you could go see when you were younger and who became an inspiration?

Mou: There was this band, actually Anel played bass for a while there, Taladro Supremo. First we used to go and see them play the most irreverent we-don't-give-a-fuck mixture of punk and noise ever done in Monterrey. Actually Dave

from Ratas del Vaticano played guitar there too! And for me they were and inspiration and my first contact with the DIY/punk thing. After some years of going to their shows I started my first band.

Anel: Playing with Taladro Supremo gave me an idea of how it is to do everything by yourself. But it was not until I quit the band and Nene Records took form, that I knew being independent it is not struggling in your life, as many many bands in the underground see it as, it is not the last option you have to do what you want, it is the real deal to do WHAT EVER you want, and that once you really start doing something, things won't stop happening. You have not only to do it yourself, you have to make it happen yourself. While being the bass player in Taladro Supremo I'd enjoy having Los Llamarada play with us sometimes, they seemed to be tuned with us. One day, on acid, by accident I played Los Llamarada and I thought, they were the only band in the nene records catalog ('cause we put some tracks as free download) worth tripping on acid. And the very next week XYX started, as a band to listen on acid. If you can call that inspiration, it seems more to me as challenging myself.

There seems to be a special breed of bands coming from Monterrey these days, I didn't find bands like that in the rest of Mexico...What makes Monterrey unique and how has it shaped XYX's music?

Mou: Monterrey is a strange place. Since we are born we have been told that Monterrey is a big industrial city full of progress and shit... But as you grow up you kind of figure out it is a lie. Yes, we live in a big polluted city with lots of industries but the mentality of the people is still on the stone age. Very traditionalist, moralist and elitist people live here. All expecting everyone to fulfill a certain role within society. And I guess one of the reasons we make music is because we don't fit in their puzzle of society. I mean, people our age is getting married, getting loans for houses and all that shit because they gave in.



Anel: the closest to Texas, the weirdest you are. XYX is shaped this way because we are not from this planet. We don't do or don't do things because the others do or don't. People in Monterrey are very very strange, they have a problem with pride, big time.

What role had you past bands - Bam Bam, Mama Burger... and your record label, Nene Records, in building a "scene" in Monterrey?

Mou: Well, Bam Bam is still active. We are planning the recording of our next record. And I guess Mamá Burger is going to release a new record but that will be it for Mama B.

Both bands were part of the 2nd generation of Nene Record's bands. Which came to had the impact the first generation (Taladro Supremo and Ruidos en el Techo) never had on mexican youth. Its been years of hard work and I think we have made a positive effect on Monterrey's music scene, like, we were the first non-electronica net label in México. Since then, everyone is putting their albums online, which is kinda cool because in some way a lot of bands understood that you dont need a big label to make a good record and deliver it to the people.

Is there any special recipe behind XYX's songwriting? The first EP had very short and urgent songs, but the new songs that you play live are longer, more complex maybe...

Mou: Its really a 50/50 thing. Anel makes the melodies and I make the rhythm. This is one of those bands that if you replace a member with another person it will never sound the same. I think we have very distinctive ways of playing our instruments and that's why it sounds like that.

Anel: If you can call it a recipe, whatever we think it's impossible to play, that's what we'll play. There's something else I like to point: we never imagine songs, we just get together to jam and the song is done until it gets recorded. I first started writing lyrics and then making melodies, now I'm just writing lyrics five minutes before start recording vocals, and it's working way better than it ever did. I never know how it's going to sound like, it all happens in the moment, and it surprises me. I love it.

Have you ever toured in Mexico? Would you say that you get more interest from people outside of Mexico?

Mou: No, we just played in Monterrey. Here in Mexico people don't know us because the press doesn't pay attention to what we are doing. And most of the people likes just what the magazines say its cool. And outside Mexico there's been a lot of interest on the stuff we and other bands like Ratas del Vaticano are doing. I don't know why really. Maybe because they think we are a 3rd world rarity aor something.

Anel: We want to play in Mexico City, but I don't know other bands that could work out on the same bill tho.

You've played a bunch of shows in Austin recently, is there a special connection between MTY and Austin? Is it hard to cross the border into the U.S. and how does living near La Frontera affect your lives?

Mou: Well, Austin was part of Mexico, so in a way we are connected with the people and the city, and we have made really good friends there. And yes.. there's no guaranty that you can cross the border even if you have a visa. There is always special permits that you have to ask, drug seeking dogs, officials...

Anel: Well, man, living close to la frontera is total mixture. I don't know if there's a connection between Austin and MTY, but I have special connections with people from Austin, that seem hard to make with people from other places. It was hard to me to get my visa for such a long time, but the harder I thought I'd be, the hardest I'd get. It's a matter of beliefs. When you think you're doing the right thing, and you feel the calling, nothing stops you. And I knew I had to cross to Texas to find more people like me.

What made you choose to sing in your own language?

Anel: Spanish is romantic and powerful. It sounds rough, it makes me wanna tell the truth in 10 different ways. It makes me want to make you learn some and understand the truth I am telling you in 10 different ways.

Mou: Drum language? Can't speak other.

How did you end up releasing a record on S-S? What future plans - records, tours- do you have?

Mou: We did some recordings and send them to Scot Soriano. The day after he wanted to put the first 7" ... actually it was the day after our first gig. Now we are releasing a new 7" with Skulltones and we are recording a full LP that Siltbreeze will release in the fall. And maybe something for our tapes label Penetración Cómica Tapes

Last words?

Mou: Let your body do what your mind can't do

8.R.I.P SOCIETY

Australian label RIP SOCIETY has been releasing a lot of good records in the last little while and has even more on the way, so it felt like a good time to ask some question to Nic about it. I think the interview turned out really good, but read for yourself.



Hey Nic, how's it going? I'll start at the beginning and ask you about RIP001, the CIRCLE PIT 7". Was it the idea of putting out a record by this specific band that made you decide to start a label or the other way around (you wanted to start a label and then thought of CIRCLE PIT)? Is RIP Society your first attempt at a record label? How's the response to your releases been so far, is there much interest for RIP Society in Australia? In the world?

Hi Alex, I'm going pretty well. Stressed but excited as there's a lot happening in the next couple of months for RIP Society. I'm currently listening to Sex Pistols "Never Mind The Bollocks" for the first time since being a teenager (I'm now 22), sounds way better than I remembered, kind of like a Slade! RIP Society Records started in late 2008, partially because I wanted to start a record label and partially because I had the opportunity to release the first Circle Pit 7". At the time I was doing my honours year at University and playing a lot of shows as a member of Circle Pit (I played an old moog and some other noise making devices). The 7" had been recorded as early as March and come October the record still wasn't out, so I offered to do it.

This is my first attempt at a label although I'd done the whole cd-r thing for noise rock / drone bands I'd been in. I'd grown a bit tired of that approach; it feels a bit throw away and non-committal. I mean those things still have their place but I felt local bands deserved a more ambitious and bold outlet for their music. A few years ago there wasn't really the culture of local vinyl releases in Australia, mostly because of how expensive it is to press records here. Pair that with our population size and geographic isolation it gets pretty difficult for a label to sustain regular vinyl releases.

The response has been really positive on the local and international front. It's pretty amazing that a dude in Poland is stoked on Kitchen's Floor and there are high school girls in Sydney that own the majority of RIP releases. Even the "music industry" has been looking towards RIP Society: Kitchen's Floor and Bed Wettin' Bad Boys were both asked to open for Dinosaur Jr and Zond are playing a Lou Reed curated festival at the Opera House (that ugly building on the postcards). It's more than likely that Royal Headache and Circle Pit are approached by industry schmucks trying to latch onto something that's actually exciting on the daily. I deserve at least 0.000002% of the credit for their success.

Do you feel there's a guiding line to the releases your put out, something in common between all the bands you put out? Do you consider RIP Society a punk label, a garage label, a rock'n'roll label? Have these terms got any importance to you? Your releases have a definite homemade aesthetic (photocopied inserts, hand-stamped labels, hand-written lyrics...), is that due to financial restraints or is it just a result of wanting things to look this way?

I consider RIP Society a punk label and a rock 'n' roll label. I don't know about garage, that term doesn't sit well with me. I can't explain why I just don't like the term garage. Everything I've put out or have planned for release just seemed to make perfect sense. There's no set guidelines, it's more of a gut feeling where I drunkenly slur/text a band, "leme do a record". Saying that I think the common link between all the bands/releases is a feeling of urgency. Not saying that any of the bands are musically or in any other way groundbreaking but I feel these bands are completely necessary in the Australian musical climate of 2010. To some degree I believe all the bands on RIP Society have develop out dissatisfaction to whatever is going on around them. Instead of pandering to shitty tastemakers, blogs, the independent music community etc bands on R.I.P Society have found certain style and sentiment that isn't being represented in their town and gone for it.

In regards to the homemade aesthetic, I'd say it is more of an intentional choice but financial restraints do play into it. I've seen eye to eye with the bands ideas for packaging/artwork every time so far as I definitely think it's more important for the artwork to reflect the music rather than some type of label aesthetic. I make all the label posters/advertisements and choose to use Letraset, hand rendered type, strange found imagery, dumb/blunt slogans etc as I want to communicated a relation to the history of punk/outsider music culture. I hope that someone on the other side of the world who also loves GG Allin, Chrome, The Replacements and Swell Maps will instinctively be drawn to the RIP "visual aesthetic" and look further into the bands.

What past and present labels do you look up to, and why? Please develop as much as you feel.

As predictable as it is SST is my favourite record label of all time! To me they're the template for a punk record label, a really ambitious company that jumped in the deep end and figured shit out for themselves. Locally I believe I owe a lot to Aargh and Stained Circles as they are two of the only labels in recent times that have been sure-fire places to look for great Australian punk/garage music. Because of them people in Australia are back into the culture of buying local vinyl releases and digging around their own backyards for new music. I also think there's a real charm to the private press / short run labels like Near Tapes and Spanish Magic. From the USA, seeing the logo of Siltbreeze, S-S, Fashionable Idiots, Richie Records and Criminal IQ it generally means you are going to be purchasing a quality music product. I also like the idea of regional record labels, labels that document the music of a certain place at a certain time. I guess I'd put RIP Society in this category.

There's been a lot of good to great punk/ garage/ hardcore records coming out of Australia in the past few years. Has it always been the case and the rest of the world was just not paying attention, or would you say there's definitely been an improvement in the quality of music coming out of here in recent times? I mean of course I know that Australia's got a rich history of all kinds of rock'n'roll bands and gave birth to a lot of bands, underground or not, that are regarded as classics in the whole world, but it feels to me like there wasn't this much great underground punk (etc) being made here say five years ago. Am I full of shit for thinking so? And if not, what the fuck happened??

I think you're right and would extend it by saying at the moment Australian music is collectively better than it ever has been before. Although I wasn't in their firsthand (still living and attending school in Far North Queensland) it seems a lot of the underground music from 2000 - 2005 hasn't aged too well. Saying that I'd completely missed great bands from this time period such as Breaking The Law, New Season and Sea Scouts until recently. Speaking to some older friends over the weekend they said there were some amazing bands back then but if it wasn't angular or post-rock nobody gave a shit. I'm sure there's some gems amongst the hardcore scene that I don't know too much about, best ask Shorty or Shogun from Royal Headache (ask them for photos too).

From what I understand a lot of the recent "famous" Australian punk bands are located in Melbourne. Being based in Sydney, how do you feel about that? Is that just because bands from Melbourne get more hype thrown at them or is there actually more going on here? What do you think are the positives and negatives of living in Sydney, as far as music goes? Tell us about your five favorite current Sydney bands.

There's no doubt that Melbourne has the best support network for punk/garage/outsider music in Australia, but it's far from the be all and end all of Australian music. As an outsider I feel it's not hard to start a band, get gigs and have somewhat of a following in Melbourne. Playing music in Sydney is

difficult as there aren't many good sized venues and all the illegitimate warehouse venues are closing or moving quite frequently. You need to really want to do it. At the moment most shows I help put on in Sydney feels like a huge triumph and people really appreciate that they're happening. Sydney music is in a very healthy state right now but it'd be nice if there were some regular venues to play. I'm in an interview with Jack and Angie from Circle Pit where we talk about there being no template or long running tradition for underground music in Sydney so you need to create your own culture. It should be getting published in Maximum Rock 'N' Roll so I'd recommend reading that if it ever sees the light of day. Sydney is my favourite city in Australia, I will NEVER move to Melbourne. Here are 5 of my top non-RIP Sydney bands.....

WHORES: This band has gone from an ok swamp/garage band to something way more primal and ugly. They're really into the uglier side of that 80's Australia punk thing like Grong Grong, Venom P Stinger, X and Feedtime and that's direction they seem to be going towards. Recent shows have been totally creepy and obnoxious, one particular show most of the audience was sitting down looking pretty bummed out. People were calling out for their older more swampy tunes which they refused to play. The guitarist Al looked like a mix between a Muslim and a British soccer hooligan wearing a GG Allin t-shirt.

CABORATOR: I'm so excited about this band I hassled them until they let me play bass. A bit of a super group: David from Dead Farmers, Joe from Royal Headache/Bad Wettin' Bad Boys, myself from BWBB's and Steve who plays in a Yo La Tengo/The Clean style band called Songs. Heavy jams in the vein of Creedence Clearwater Revival, early 70's Rolling Stones and 90s lo-fi stuff. Al from the UV Race said it reminded him of Tyvek, I think that's pretty appropriate.

NAKED ON THE VAGUE: Bit of a no-brainer but since discovering the good side of Sydney music I've been going to this bands shows and have seen them evolve from a pretty cool no-wave/post-punk inspired duo into something much more intense and psychedelic. On a good night (aka most nights) NOTV are totally consuming and epic. The new album is going to destroy everyone.

HOLY BALM: This band is like that millisecond in time where industrial and post-punk was turning into dance music and it *didn't* suck. Kind of like the joyous, Kraftwerk influenced Throbbing Gristle tunes meets the early days of American electro and house music. The best thing is there's no hippy or dark wave posing, Holy Balm have a sense of fun and ambition to their music that's comparable to the current Siltbreeze band Blues Control.

SOUTHERN COMFORT: A pretty new project from two members of Circle Pit, Angie and their rock solid (in playing style, not stature) rhythm guitarist Harriet Hudson. They're two of my favourite guitarists, capable of classic riffs and epic surf-meets-Neil-Young-meets-Rikk-Agnew style leads. A one-sided 12" of theirs is in the works. I decided to do this instead of a 7" as when they play live all the songs bleed and drone into each other, no pause for applause or banter.

Tell us about the other bands you put out that haven't been mentioned yet, maybe a quick description of each of them and an explanation as to why you decided to help them put out a record.

LAKES: Sean Bailey aka Lakes is one of the best and most bizarre acts in Australia. His more recent records have been in this zone between industrial, neo-folk and post-punk with a seriously heavy apocalyptic vibe. Lakes doesn't fit in anywhere, I get this impression that most Death In June, Michael Gira or industrial fans wouldn't get Lakes as he doesn't present himself as a profound artist and isn't a leather daddy flirting with "controversial" fascist imagery. Sean Bailey is the punkest of the punks, a true outsider musician.

LLOYD HONEYBROOK: At this point in time I have little time for noise music but this dude is so relentless and committed I really wanted to do something with him. We talked a heap about his honours project last year where he amplified his saxophone and uses the bell as a feedback chamber. The tape is an hour of Alvin Lucier inspired minimal feedback made by not playing the saxophone, as you'd imagine this has been the most popular of my releases.

KITCHEN'S FLOOR: Although this might seem a bit pretentious I believe this humble Brisbane band will be remembered as one of the best Australian bands of our time. Their recent Sydney 7" launch show signified this with suburban weirdos and hip inner city types all completely losing their shit. These guys write great pop songs that are really expressive and to the point but are too heavy, fucked up and real for the proper music industry in Australia to handle. I think R.I.P Society was the perfect home for this band.

ROYAL HEADACHE: Good at basketball, fun to drink with, they all have steady jobs, 2 out of 4 have cars and being associated with them makes girls more interested in me.

BED WETTIN' BAD BOYS: I put this out because I play in the band and nobody else in their right mind would have ever offered. Also because we are the best band in the world, we rip off The Replacements and cover cool bands like Thin Lizzy, CCR, Kiss and Cheap Trick.

STRAIGHT ARROWS & DEAD FARMERS: These guys taught me that straight up rock 'n' roll and punk is as relevant as ever. They are partially responsible for me giving up buying overpriced import copies of The Wire magazine and edition of 20 hand painted CD-R's packed in toe nails and pubic hair.

So far you've only put out records by Australian bands. Does the notion of "supporting your local scene" makes any sense to you or did it just happen like that? Do you only put out records by bands/people you know personally or does that not come into account? What could make you refuse to put out a record by a band that you really like musically (band members being assholes, dodgy lyrics/politics, etc)?

I don't know if this is the case elsewhere but in Australia most of the good bands are also good people. Every release so far has been by people I am friends with and respect. I don't think it was a real decision to "support my local scene", it just happens that local bands are really good and nobody else is releasing their records. I definitely think remote rock star attitudes would result in me not putting out a bands record but I don't think I would like any band like that in the first place. Factors that would make me not want to put out a record in the future is if the band glorifies junkie culture, doesn't place great endearment in music culture and instead uses music as a mere tool for their creative expression, doesn't like any hardcore punk or thinks Thin Lizzy are stupid. Basically I don't want to have anything to do with anyone that thinks they're better than punk / rock 'n' roll.

On your latest ad it says there's gonna be a RIP Society zine. What's gonna be featured in there? Is it gonna be a collective effort or just your shit? Have you ever done zines in the past?

I've had plans of doing an RIP Society zine for nearly a year but due with the emergence of publications like Mountain Fold, Stained Sheets and Negative Guest List documenting the good stuff happening in Australia, along with existing zines such as Distort upping the ante it seemed more important to get some records out. The content I have had planned has all gone wrong, questionnaires have disappeared, tapes have broken and interviews have been awkward so the theme of issue one will be "A Collection of Failed Attempts at Music Journalism". So far there's definitely going to be extensive interviews with the UV Race and Nik Kamvissis of noise rock group The Menstruation Sister as well as a collection of Royal Headache interviews deemed unfit for print by other publications.

This is my first attempt at a zine, Angie from Circle Pit is going to contribute as I really like the way she writes. I'm sure I'll get other people to contribute too. Sometime in the future I want to do a Replacements fanzine, a Nick Cave anti-fanzine and a zine of people drawing GG Allin from memory. I don't know if these will ever happen but nobody steal my ideas!

To finish where we started, CIRCLE PIT are soon putting out their first album on the well-respected, well-known Siltbreeze Records from the USA. How do you feel about it? Was there ever talk of you putting it out?

I think it's great, one of the best labels of all time putting out a record by two of my favourite people of all time. There wasn't ever any serious talk about me releasing it, I think we threw around the idea of me doing a vinyl pressing for Australia or a split release with a US label. Basically if there's a better option for any of the bands on R.I.P Society I would be happy for them to take it, I'm not doing this to build some type of resume. However there is another Circle Pit 7" in the works that will be a split release between R.I.P Society and Canada's Sweet Rot.



9. "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." (Frank Zappa)

MORE NOIZE # 2 & 3

After a few years of people stopping doing paper zines to start writing blogs or websites it's nice to see that the opposite can happen, too – here we have the dude who used to do the very geeky, latest-news-in-western-hardcore-punk oriented blog aptly titled Only In It For The Music giving up his online ramblings to get into the good old world of printing pages, photocopying them and sending the result in brown enveloppes to like-minded OCD freaks the world over. Welcome to the jungle, mate. I really feel like there's something to be said about that, as the editor of More Noize seems to be, from what I can gather, quite intensely addicted to the cyber-world, yet decided that it was still worth the effort to actually put some sweat into shitting out a paper fanzine. I'm not saying this is the start of a new trend or anything but it's nice to think that blogs can be a training-ground for people to learn how to write about music and see if they enjoy it enough to go on to the next level and hurt a few trees in the process. With that said, this zine unfortunately looks as ugly and generic as any Blogspot or Myspace page, which is a real bummer as part of the superiority of this medium is that it offers possibilities for layouts that the internet just can't reproduce. Tony mentions how his initial idea was to put out a Crust War looking zine and I have to wonder if he could pull it off or if he thinks it's that easy – Crust War being one of the nicest looking hardcore punk zine ever this side of Italy's TVOR and France's Kängnäve. Anyway, content-wise, besides the fact that it also reads like a blog (don't ask me how or why, it just does) there's a lot to get into here, most of it being insanely obsessed with the most noisy punk out there, you know, CONFUSE, STATE CHILDREN, Z and their modern offsprings THE WANKYS, LEBENDEN TOTEN & co. It's surprising how that style has almost become a micro-scene of its own in the past years, to the point where a whole zine can be dedicated to it and while as a fan of this sound I enjoyed reading it I can't help feeling a bit, hmm, surprised by the fact that someone could want to do a zine covering only one sub-sub-sub-genre of a sub-genre of punk. I guess I'm getting old. Anyway, this is an ok read if you're into that style of noise with plenty of reviews, news and ramblings around the subject. The article about the author's fake myspace noisepunk band in issue 3 was the most embarrassing thing I've read in ages, seriously this is up there with writing about your girlfriend dumping you. No wait, this is worst.

COMETBUS # 52

Shit, I should be over Cometbus by now, right? Travelling across the USA, living in punk houses, falling in love with mentally insane punk girls, crazy flatmates, rotten dumpster food, self-destruction, cigarettes, shitty punk bands, the house gets evicted, start it all over again, yes, ok, sure, but no. What makes reading this still as great as it ever was is that Aaron keeps growing as a writer and perfecting its style and formula rather than trying to come up with new ones, much like a band like DISCLOSE did during their time. It's roughly the same old story but it keeps getting better every issue, so if you ever liked it I can't see a reason why you wouldn't be into this one. It's more of a novel than a zine and the overall tone is a bit darker than usual, still very californian (read: optimistic) of course but you can totally tell the guy is now a fully grown-up adult and life hasn't always been a piece of cake. Regardless, reading this makes me want to feel alive and appreciate what I have; it feels like reading a long-ass letter from an old friend, and I'd recommend it to anyone who's ever been stuck in a small town with a crew of weirdos and useless fuck-ups they call "friends" long enough to appreciate the fact that even the most desperate deadbeat has an equal amount of qualities and flaws. Start to think it's better to have fucked-up

friends than to have no friends at all, let a few years pass, then realize that maybe in fact it would have been better to be alone and not have anyone else than yourself to blame for your own failures. Read this until the end: the last paragraph feels like suddenly getting punched in the face by the same person who's been hugging you for the past two hours.

TAMPAX || HITLER SS – split EP (Boot)

What do you say when someone bootlegs the best record ever? You say "thanks man, but fuck off now 'cause I need to be alone", then close the door and stay locked in your room for a few days, hugging the speakers, jumping around, dick in one hand bottle in the other, and when you're done pretending to be a drugged-up monkey you stop and think and start believing that maybe God exists after all coz' you can't see any other explanation to the existence of that fucking guitar sound straight outta space that makes UFO Dictator the best fucking punk song ever. Then you flip the record and think, oh God, HITLER SS is alright, too.

ROGERNOMIX – EP (Always Never Fun)

Good old kiwi hardcore bought to you by some of the delinquents responsible for SHORTLIVED, SCAB, PSYCHIC JAMS and probably a dozen more bands based in the islands whose government is secretly run by sheep and Peter Jackson (in that order). Sounds good to me, it's got all the things that make me dig SHORTLIVED (perfectly distorted bass sound, dark vibes, loads of energy, snottily yelled vocals, slightly crusty sounding but neither too generic nor too dumb and never ridiculously epic) except that the song structures are a bit less original, a bit more straightforward, not saying that SHORTLIVED is a complicated tech-hardcore band or anything but I think they have a bit more ideas to make their noise memorable than ROGERNOMIX do. While I find it hard not to compare the two bands, the female/ male tradeoff vocals and the fact that this one rarely goes into blastbeat territory while still being high-energy as fuck makes it impossible to mistake one for the other. The hyper high-pitched feedback opening some of the songs is killing my ears in an unpleasant way (for an example of a guitar sound that kills my ears in a pleasant way see THE WANKYS) and makes me regret listening to this with headphones at full volume.

CIRCLE PIT – EP (RIP Society)

Because I spent most of the past ten years with a 0.80€/ 50cl beer in my hand listening to *Why?* and *Damaged* it is somewhat confusing trying to find who to compare this Sydney band to, so I'll just say that they grab my ears in more effective ways than what I heard of ROYAL TRUX, who they seem to get compared to mostly because the core of both bands is a female/ male hipster duo that likes to dress up so as to be ready at all times for a Vice Magazine fashion shoot. Who cares, I hear you say. The thing is that sonically this works just right – the two songs on this first single have a great driving raw power and guitar leads that are catchy in the best possible moody way, not pop-catchy but art-punk bittersweet catchy with more salt & pepper than sugar on top of the cake if you get my drift. You probably don't so just blast that A side at maximum volume and try not to nod your head or tap your feet or kill your flatmate and then read this again. They were recently invited to some radio show and played songs by THE GERMS, THE STROKES, T-REX, BLUE OYSTER CULT as well as their old band KIOSK if that can give you some insight into their sound (probably not). Great cover art, too, and their first album will be out on Siltbreeze by the time you read this.

ROYAL HEADACHE – EP (RIP Society)

While I don't care for any of Michael Jackson's solo output I'll be the first to admit that the JACKSON 5 were a fine combo and ABC a great song, mainly because of the way Michael's voice worked and especially the playful soulfulness he put into reaching those high-end notes, so full of passion and joy and SOUL that listening to it invariably makes me want to feel young and optimistic and go out and do shit as opposed to stay inside and write record reviews. Well, ROYAL HEADACHE's vocalist doesn't sound like lil' Michael in most ways but fuck me if listening to this guy sing doesn't make me want to smile and go walk the dog in the park rather than check my emails for the 100th time of the day morning. This is the best 100% good-vibe band I've heard in a while and Allah knows we need some of them in those dark times, but fuck how hard is it to do something that sounds positive and optimistic and naïve while not sounding cheesy and dumb? If you've answered "not at all" I dare you to write four songs as good as the ones on this record. Go ahead and try. What, you don't even know where to start? There you go. It doesn't hurt either that the recording is just dirty and primal enough to give that 60s recorded in the garage punk edge to the songs. This record seemed highly-anticipated in the Australian underground music scene, which as it is their first and all either means that they've been hyped to death by the right persons OR are such an incredibly amazing live band that people just couldn't wait to bring some of the fun home. I'd say a little bit of both, probably. Now it's sunny outside so excuse me while I go walk the dog.

AH KRAKEN – tatiana 12" (Gaffer/ Down Boy)

Ok, I'm back from walking the dog. It was a nice walk, it's pretty sunny today and the motherfucker even pulled off that magnificent trick that only those four-legged bastards know the secret of: he thoughtfully smelled another apparently

random dog's shit for about 20 seconds and then, without further notice, made it disappear. Wow. Not that eating shit is related to that AH KRAKEN record in any obvious way but then again it surely feels more related to that one than to the ROYAL HEADACHE 7" mentioned above, as there is something truly disgusting/ disgusted in this music. It is city music, more precisely modern city music and even more precisely modern desolate wasteland industrial area of a lifeless working class filled with rotten brains addicted to cheap internet porn and terror-inducing mind-washing TV newsflash kinda city music. Named after everyone's favorite dictator and some sea monster from the Scandinavian mythology that may or may not be a giant octopus, this french band is part of the infamous Grand Tripe Alliance Internationale De L'Est, a big loose collective of weirdo musicians putting the punk back into art-punk, with a tendency for provocative/ dodgy lyrics and song titles, imaginative sounds, more or less obscure influences and a dark twisted sense of humor that's most likely lost on all their international audience as it is probably also on some of their french one. This, their third vinyl release after a 7" on Sweet Rot and an LP on In The Red,

is a one-sided repress of their "autopsie d'un tronc de femme aujourd'hui" (I could tell you what it means but that would ruin the fun so I won't) tape and seems like a good starting place to get into the action: this is pure audio destruction that owes as much to no-wave and industrial noise as it does to living a life of shit in a shitty city and not giving a fuck about being in tune or dressing up like a young indie hipster or all those things that most young music fans are usually into. This is the sound of shut-down factories, beating the shit out of old pieces of rusty metal, being addicted to failure and believing in nothing because, you know, why bother? You should give it a try.

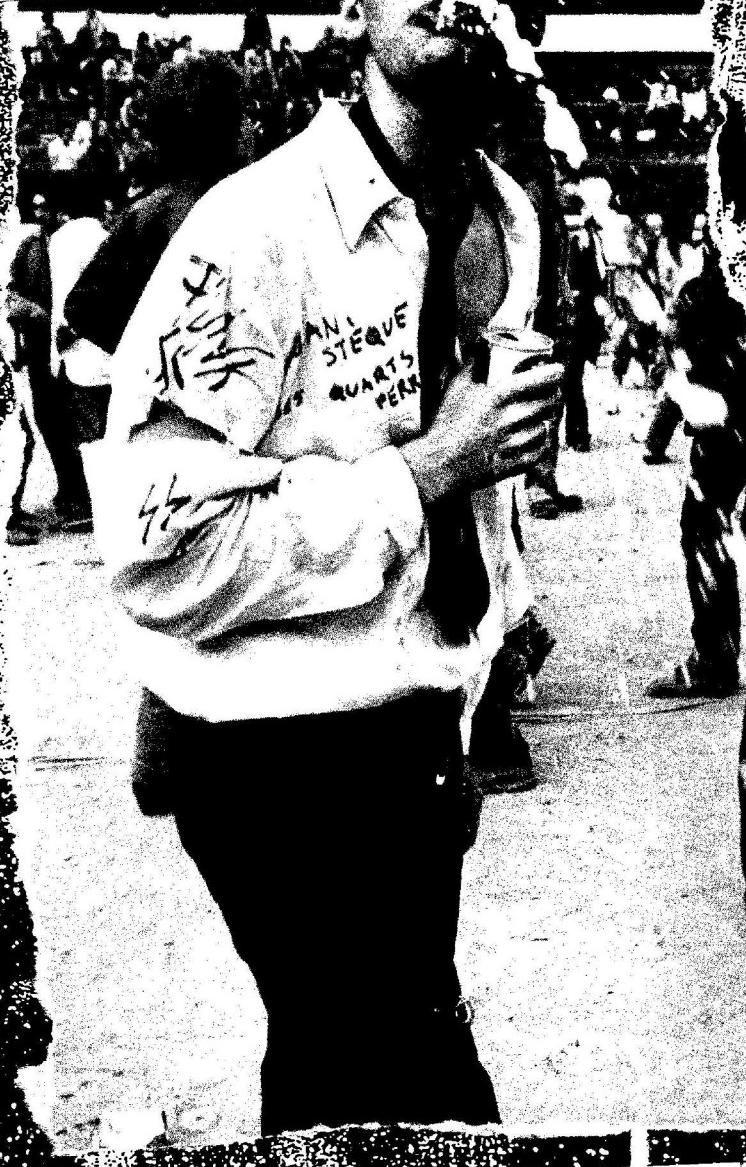
"This was just a French fan,

I think. He'd obviously read

that this was

what punks were

supposed to do.



THE UV RACE – LP (Aarght)

And now back to Mongolia. You know how sometimes a record cover can look so sick that you buy it based on that alone? Well it surely won't happen with this one as both front and back covers are absolutely sterile and unattractive (I'd say "ugly" if ugly I didn't like), just two really close shots of the chests of both the female and male blue cousins of the Incredible Hulk wearing some gold amulet that's probably meant to have something to do with the band name but I don't even wanna know. Fortunately the music is way more exciting than the cover, song after song of very catchy slightly mongoloid garage punk that feels like these people had a hell of a lot of fun writing, playing and recording this, which in turns makes it a really relaxing fun listen. It all sounds pretty simple and unpretentious and at the same time there are a lot of great ideas in there, some good synth lines, some horn, perfect clean guitar sound and what has to be the most genuine idiot-savant of a frontman in the whole australian music scene. Lyrics are awesome and completed with songs explanations that makes you feel like you're just talking to an old mate about day to day stuff like working, sending text messages, falling in love, public transports and the end of world.

PASSION ARMÉE – LP (Self-released)

France has a long tradition of ultra-left wing/ anarchists/ autonomous activists with the most progressive & inventive political ideas doing the most embarrassing, terrible, uninventive music out there, justifying it by saying that the lyrics and "the message" matters more than the actual music. Ok sure but then why bother making music at all? This is obviously frustrating for people who are both interested in radical politics and radical sounds, and has lead some to slowly but surely give up on the idea that music and politics mix well, which is of course both sort of true and complete bullshit, because the kind of inherent politics that underground punk has been consciously or not waving the flag for in the past 30 or so years is largely ignored or misunderstood by most political activists. Still both worlds continue to mix in varying degrees from country to country and sometimes something good will come out of it, something like PASSION ARMÉE, a band whose main purpose was serious political propaganda fueled by the spirit of the various french riots of recent years, post-situationist autonomous groups like the ones responsible for the infamous "The Coming Insurrection" book, the squat movement, the brutal right-wing neo-liberal government that's been in power in France for the past few years and so on. From what I understand PASSION ARMÉE envisioned their band as an affinity group aiming to promote anti-capitalist insurrection and were consequently playing a lot of benefit gigs mainly in local squats, refusing to play in venues that didn't meet their criterias, selling their records for donation or as cheaply as possible, etc. With that said, they also had an understanding of what punk is and maybe of what it isn't, which surely helped in the making of the songs on this record, their first and last vinyl appearance. Of course it isn't the first time a band mixes radical politics with good music but the way this band approached it reminded me more of the "real"/ serious examples of it (UK CRASS type bands and italian 80s hardcore for instance) than of the modern

punk bands whose politics are largely based on lifestyle and activist pose (Crimethinc type bands, d-beat bands with no interest in anti-war protests, the whole "anarcho-punk as a style of music rather than punk made by anarchists" sort of thing, etc). I lived in the same city as PASSION ARMÉE almost from their beginning to their end and got into a number of arguments with them about various subjects and was always pleasantly surprised at how they were open and interested into discussing ideas even if it had to be in a confrontational manner (they say it themselves – *we believe in conflict*) and for that I came to respect them a lot more than a lot of other punks and activists, so for me this is an important record. Musically the main influences here are JOY DIVISION, cold-wave, synth-wave, THE MOB, dark minimalist riffs and beats, simple synth lines and the annihilation of civilisation. It isn't perfect, the recording is a bit too clean, all songs should have been in french (the ones in english don't work as well, partly because of the strong french accent that distracts from the point being made, partly because the lyrics themselves lack the kind of poetical darkness found in the french ones) but when it works it really does so if the idea of Guy Debord and Ian Curtis drinking cheap beer in an abandoned building seems appealing to you, I'd say give this one a chance.

WARNING/WARNING – my world EP (Kick Rock/ Flower Of Carnage)

This one's easy – if you like early LEBENDEN TOTEN you'll like this, period. The formula is exactly the same, simple guitar riffs buried under layers of distortion and fuzz, sick anti-solos, 1-2-1-2 inept fast drumming, relatively catchy/ bouncy bass lines that are a bit distorted but sounds clean compared to the rest of this mess, simple punk songs structures, and frantic reverbed male vocals that are the only obvious difference between this and the first few records/tapes by the aforementioned PDX thrashers. I like it but...

WARNING/WARNING – nuclear cult CS (Self-released)

... this is way more exciting, challenging and dare I say ambitious. Same band, same kind of sound, recorded only a few months later but instead of sticking to the most generic side of the noisecore formula these french fuckers decided to try and take it somewhere more personal, and it works. While the 7" had some kind of "fun" vibe to it in that it made you want to pogo and drink beers with your mates (even if it had an anti-alcohol song!), this sounds way more deranged, freaked out and dark. More mid-tempo/ slow parts, some falling-apart kind of moments, good use of samples (a very rare thing in my book), the bass lines are still simple but have more of a sinister groove to them, vocals sound demented as fuck and the guitar is doing all kind of weird shit that I can't identify for sure, but probably making more use of the good old wah-wah pedal. The theme of the whole tape is the nuclear bomb/ nuclear threat, and each song flows nicely into the next one, which makes this thing a really coherent, conceptual sort of tape. Shit, the more I listen to it the more I love what I hear, and unlike the 7" I think this tape could please both fans of Confuse and people into more menacing psychedelic sounding straight-up noise shit. Basically if the 7" was their take on Hate/war this sounds more like a band who also listens to Spending loud night, even if it's still not quite at that level in the "what the fuck?" department (but then again, what is?).

BILLY BAO – may 08 LP (Parts Unknown)

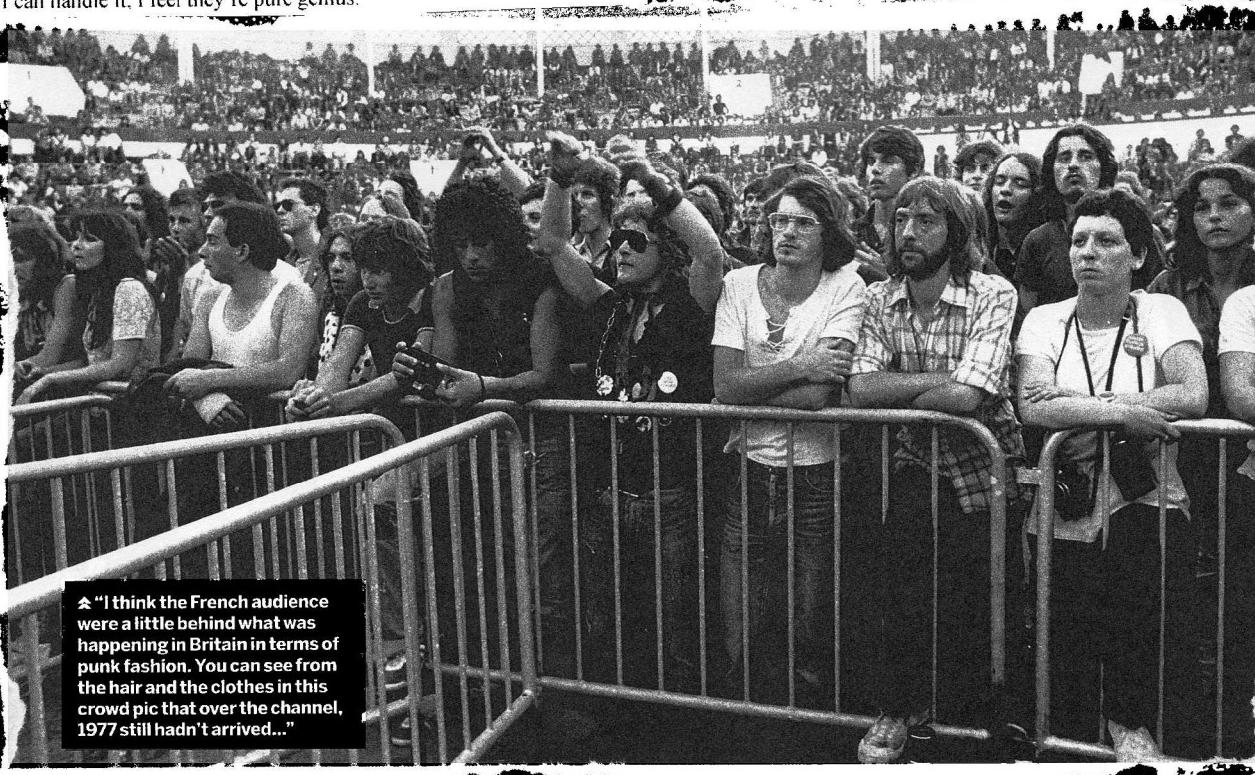
I received this record on a cold saturday morning in december last year. european winter. after a hard week of working in a factory doing dumb, repetitive labour surrounded by a bunch of morons who wanted to fight me or, at best. just take the piss out of the fact I didn't get kicks outta talking about the local soccer team. At that point I had been working full-time for three months after three years of unemployment, illegally living in a social building with a monthly income that was considered two times below the national poverty level. in a culturally-diverse neighbourhood filled with cops, prostitutes, "illegal" romanian immigrants, hip-hop street kids, pot-dealers and the recently-arrived artists and hipsters on their way to happily gentrify the place. Those three years on the dole were the most stable and easy years of my adult life so far, and that neighborhood is my favourite place that I've lived in, but what I mean here is that my everyday, immediate surrounding felt "political" – as I was walking the same streets of the same narrow area with nothing urgent to do day after day, month after month, it would have been hard not to notice the place slowly but surely changing as new laws were being put into practice by the new borderline-extreme-right wing government, the most blatantly brutal one I've seen in power in France in my short life. Squats were being evicted on a monthly, perhaps weekly basis, primary schools were covered with hand-painted signs protesting the deportation of african-kids to countries they didn't feel any attachment to, the vehicles in which prostitutes did their business were frequently destroyed by assholes, universities & public transport companies seemed to be on strike every month, factories were being shut-down, workers were holding their bosses hostages and threatening to blow-up the factory if a fair deal wasn't negotiated, all the while fascist-based street-violence was on the rise and the price of food and rent kept going up while the media was trying to convince us that the crisis wasn't gonna last too long. You know that feeling, when the world is shutting down and you know that things aren't gonna get better, those moments where you are utterly convinced that you are living in bad times, end-times, that things are either gonna get worse or just end, but not get better? This record is the soundtrack to that very feeling. I had been waiting for it for months and when it finally arrived I just put it on the turntable and played it five times in a row for about two hours of horrifying amazement, in awe of the insane brutality contained in its grooves. This is the soundtrack to feeling like shit and knowing that the reason for that feeling is wearing a suit & tie and lives in houses more expensive than the average worker's life income, the soundtrack to knowing we're fucked and that all there is to do is smile and consume and participate in this fucking mess or die. This is insane and repetitive like the noises inside shitty grey factories, primitive like the feelings hunger brings to the human mind. The vocals sound like the screams of someone being burned-alive – no other record has ever brought that image to my mind. BILLY BAO's music has often been compared to the noise-rock of the BRAINBOMBS and, while the two bands share similar deranged downer vibes, I think the main difference is that the topics covered by the BRAINBOMBS (serial killers, psychopaths and the ways they relate to their victims, etc) aren't scary to most people and especially to those who listen to them (mostly record nerds, mostly male, mostly middle-class), as those topics feel completely detached from everyday reality – I mean, sure serial killers exist, but what are the odds of you or me being the victims of one? In that aspect the BRAINBOMBS are, like a lot of metal bands for example, a fantasy band, a band that doesn't cover my or your reality, and I cannot relate to them nor can they scare me or make me uncomfortable or make me think about my life, while BILLY BAO is just the opposite of that – the horrified/ horrifying feelings conveyed in their songs are all too real, they hit too close to home, and this fucking mess is all too fucking scary for me to handle on most days. But on the days I can handle it, I feel they're pure genius.

SCRATCH & SNIFF #1

First issue of this new US zine was a mixed bag. I was excited to get this as the editor's previous publication, *Treble High Talent Low*, was a fairly good read mixing USHC with proto-punk, non-generic content and good layouts, but in the years inbetween he seems to have developed a new writing style that feels too pretentious, focusing on style at the expense of substance. It's fine if you know a lot of fancy words man, but you don't need to use all of them in every sentence you write, you know? Almost every one of his sentences is a complicated mess indeed, and not in a good way, which makes his shit unpleasant and boring to read. It doesn't feel like rock'n'roll writing, it doesn't even feel like free-jazz writing, it feels like some university student trying to impress other students by showing them how hip he is. Bo-ring. There's also a lot of in-jokes in there, giving the feeling that this zine would probably be more exciting for young people who live and go to punk shows in the Buffalo area. There's a top 13 records written by some dude that manages to be even more annoying and pointless than the editor without the use of the aforementioned fancy words and structures: congratulations! But the worst part is the ROT SHIT interview, that already appeared in MRR a few months back and that was already pointless and way too long in the first place, so I was definitely not pleased to see it again; if a bunch of internet message boards nerds trying and failing at being funny and offensive to a bunch of other internet nerds seems appealing to you, this seven pages long yawning-party might be the greatest thing you'll read in print this year. Anyway, the zine is saved by its killer layout and by the fact that one of the writers, Rich Kroneiss (who also happens to be Terminal Boredom's main man) provides some good reviews and two great articles about LINCOLN STREET AVENUE, a 60s psych band made up of native americans proto-punks, I kid you not, as well as an awesome piece about THE CRAMPS and the death and influence of Lux Interior completed with sick pictures and an unpretentious, passionate writing style. More soul less pose, please.

THE NEGATIVE GUEST LIST – issues 1 to 11

It feels appropriate to review this after SCRATCH & SNIFF as both zines seems to come from the same kinda place, sharing a view of punk that's broader and more informed than usual, as well as a refreshing openness to other types of outsider rock'n'roll. Furthermore editor Brendon is the same maniac responsible for DIRTY ALLEYS/ DIRTY MINDS, a zine in which he did some of the same mistakes found in the first ish of S&S, ie writing in an overtly wanky way that felt too forced and detached from the points being made. Well, that was true of the first issue especially and of the second one to a degree – if you wanna know about the third one just flip the rag you're reading right now! Anyway, Brendon's writing has improved a lot in NGL, mainly by getting rid of all the unnecessary bullshit and 10 minutes long sentences and focusing on actually *saying something*, and it works! His intros, interviews and especially his reviews make this zine a true pleasure to read, full of nerve and attitude and an impressive knowledge and understanding of what he's talking about, especially considering his young age and the vastness of the coverage at hand, from 60's garage to psych to noise to drone to hardcore to art-punk to black metal to pop, if the usual punk zine is painted all black then this one is a bloody fucking rainbow. A lot of space is dedicated to current aussie bands and it seems like a perfect time for someone to document all the great music being made here. The zine is a collective thing as well so you get plenty of different voices for your money. I could go on, or you could just take my word and send this guy some cash. Do it do it do it.



▲ "I think the French audience were a little behind what was happening in Britain in terms of punk fashion. You can see from the hair and the clothes in this crowd pic that over the channel, 1977 still hadn't arrived..."